until recently regarded as a vivid expression of the BCP's commitment to do everything possible upon its ascent to power to assert the claim for the return of the land. If the two major parties have been vocal on the issue, they however seemed to have differed on the strategies relating to when and how to assert the claim.

Since turning its back on the South African government in the 1970s and aligning itself with the Liberation Movement and the OAU policy, the BNP policy on the subject of territorial claim was characterised by ambivalence. On the one hand it appeared reluctant to raise the matter with the then Nationalist Party (NP) government in Pretoria. This reluctance reflected the concern that to do so might be interpreted as collusion with the policies of apartheid whose essence was to alienate barren parts of South Africa and assign them to Africans as their homelands. The matter was therefore to be raised at an appropriate moment when a majority government was in power in South Africa. But a 1990 statement addressed to the Lesotho government by Mr. Lekhoana Jonathan, current BNP General Secretary, seemed to suggest that the De Klerk era had opened an opportunity to engage the South African Government on the subject. Mr. Jonathan argued that:

Lesotho is still crying for the return of the territory it lost. President De Klerk cannot enter into final talks with neighbouring countries and the people of South Africa before this matter is submitted for his consideration. In any case our party believes that of all South African leaders he is the right man to settle this issue with. We urge the government to move fast on this matter.2

The tone of the letter clearly underpinned the fact that in the opinion of the BNP, former President De Klerk was not perceived in the same light as his predecessors. Such a change of attitude gravitating towards doing serious business with the apartheid regime had infact been a pattern of many African States since De Klerk's ascend to power in 1989.

Indications suggest that prior to the February 1990 coup d'état which eventually removed King Moshoeshoe II from the throne, the government of Lesotho was positioning itself for crucial initiatives on the matter of retrocession. Apparently a forum such as the defunct Convention for

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2 BNP statement reported in the Moeletsi oa Basotho, 25 February, 1990 (Translation is mine).